United Nations S/PV.5933

# Security Council

Sixty-third year

*Provisional*

**5933**rd meeting

Friday, 11 July 2008, 4.10 p.m.

New York

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| *President:* | Mr. Le Luong Minh | (Viet Nam) |
| *Members:* | Belgium | Mr. Belle |
| | Burkina Faso | Mr. Kafando |
| | China | Mr. Wang Guangya |
| | Costa Rica | Mr. Weisleder |
| | Croatia | Mr. Jurica |
| | France | Mr. Ripert |
| | Indonesia | Mr. Kleib |
| | Italy | Mr. Mantovani |
| | Libyan Arab Jamahiriya | Mr. Dabbashi |
| | Panama | Mr. Arias |
| | Russian Federation | Mr. Churkin |
| | South Africa | Mr. Kumalo |
| | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | Sir John Sawers |
| | United States of America | Mr. Khalilzad |

## Agenda

Peace and security in Africa

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

08-41947 (E)

*The meeting was called to order at 4.10 p.m.*

**Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

**Peace and security in Africa**

**The President**: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Angola, Australia, Canada, Liberia, New Zealand, the Netherlands, Sierra Leone, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zimbabwe in which they request to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the consideration of the item without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

*At the invitation of the President, Mr. Chidyausiku (Zimbabwe), Mr. Antonio (Angola) and Mr. Mahiga (United Republic of Tanzania) took seats at the Council table; the representatives of the other aforementioned countries took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.*

**The President**: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the Permanent Representative of South Africa, requesting that the Security Council extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mrs. Lila H. Ratsifandrihamanana, Permanent Observer of the African Union.

It is so decided.

I invite Mrs. Ratsifandrihamanana to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2008/447, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Australia, Belgium, Canada, Croatia, France, Italy, Liberia, New Zealand, the Netherlands, Sierra Leone, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

I wish to draw members' attention to document S/2008/452, which contains the text of a letter dated 10 July 2008 from the Permanent Observer of the African Union, transmitting the African Union resolution on Zimbabwe.

I shall now give the floor to the representative of Zimbabwe.

**Mr. Chidyausiku** (Zimbabwe): Let me begin by reiterating the fact that Zimbabwe, a country at peace with itself and its neighbours, poses absolutely no threat to international peace and security and should therefore not be a focus of this Council. In view of that, the situation in Zimbabwe does not warrant the adoption of a Security Council resolution under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter.

Zimbabwe has been a victim of incessant meddling through several measures, including declared and undeclared economic sanctions, merely because the Government embarked upon a process of equitable distribution of land after the former colonial Power, under a Labour Party Government, reneged on its responsibilities stipulated in the Lancaster House Agreement of 1979.

Unfortunately, because of the decision we took, the British and their allies have used their media to viciously portray Zimbabwe as a lawless, disorderly and undemocratic country. We have been haunted in all forums, including the Commonwealth, the Human Rights Council, the General Assembly's Third Committee and now the Security Council. The root cause of the crisis, land ownership, is lost in the hype about so-called human rights violations, a subject far easier to sell for propaganda purposes. To us, the ferocity of the anti-Zimbabwe campaign and today's draft resolution underscore what is at stake — our independence and future.

There have been adverse reports on inter-party violence that have been overdramatized in the media to justify the withdrawal of Mr. Tsvangirai from the presidential run-off poll. It is important for the Council also to note that only 10 per cent of the country may have witnessed some form of violence, while 90 per cent of the country has not been affected. The violence that unfortunately took place does not justify the submission of today's draft resolution before the

Council. Let the international community not be gullible about the political machinations of the opposition in Zimbabwe. We would want to assure the Council that the cases of those people who have claimed to be victims of political violence will be investigated by the Government of Zimbabwe. Already, most of the culprits from both parties, including criminal gangs, have appeared before the courts and the law will take its course.

We are, however, astounded by some Western Powers that are pushing to add more sanctions on Zimbabwe following President Mugabe's re-election. Zimbabwe has been under sanctions enshrined in the United States' so-called Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act of 2001, which instructs international financial institutions to block aid to Zimbabwe and to deny it debt cancellation. The European Union-imposed sanctions of 2002 have resulted in the economy's underperformance and have brought much suffering to the people of Zimbabwe.

There has been an eight-year blockade of balance-of-payments support and lines of credit, but the world is made to believe that President Mugabe's economic policies have precipitated the economic problems. Recently, British Prime Minister Gordon Brown stated that his Government was working on a new sanctions regime to suffocate the ZANU-PF Government and give birth to an MDC-T Government. In addition, we have heard the European Union and the United Kingdom promising millions to Zimbabwe in the event that a Government of their choice is in place, meaning that the current one is under sanction.

We reiterate that sanctions against Zimbabwe have put the economy under siege and are affecting the vulnerable groups and general population. Many of our people are moving into neighbouring countries and beyond in search of greener pastures. It is surprising that this movement of our people to neighbouring countries in search of economic opportunities due to the impact of sanctions is what this Council is expected to endorse as a threat to international peace and security. That would be the first time that the movement of a people seeking economic opportunities elsewhere is used as a basis for a sanctions resolution under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter.

By attempting to coerce Zimbabwe into a certain form of behaviour through the force of sanctions and isolation, the West has actually created an aggrieved nation. The current sanctions against Zimbabwe are basically an expression of imperialist conquest and no amount of propaganda or denial can ever wish that away.

Political dialogue is ongoing between the contending parties in Zimbabwe. In fact, in his inauguration statement, President Mugabe reached out to the opposition and said that it was now imperative for the nation to look forward to the future with a sense of unity. He called on all political parties in Zimbabwe to enter into a comprehensive inter-party dialogue sooner rather than later in order to enhance unity and cooperation among Zimbabweans. He emphasized that such dialogue was important in resolving the socio-economic and political challenges currently prevailing in Zimbabwe. The President emphasized that the country has to move forward in unity, regardless of diverse political affiliations, united by a sense of common vision and destiny for a prosperous Zimbabwe.

Zimbabwe fully welcomes the recent African Union resolution and would like to assure members that the people of Zimbabwe are willing to engage one another in an effort to resolve their problems. It is important to remember that reconciliation is not a new concept to Zimbabwe. When Zimbabwe obtained its independence in 1980, it was faced with a situation in which it had to mould a nation out of two liberation movements and the forces of Ian Smith's regime. As the Council is well aware, it performed the task extremely well and confounded many prophets of doom. In view of that, we are confident that, with the support of our neighbours, we will once again succeed in reconciling Zimbabweans.

In line with his mandate from the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and supported by the African Union, President Mbeki was in Zimbabwe over the weekend to consult with President Mugabe and the political parties in order to chart the way forward on the current situation in the country. We are of the view that any other separate initiatives on that matter would be counterproductive and serve to undermine the role of SADC and President Mbeki.

In view of the aforementioned, today's draft resolution is a clear abuse of Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter as it seeks to impose sanctions on Zimbabwe under the pretext that the country is now a

threat to international peace and security simply because the elections held did not yield a result favourable to the United Kingdom and its allies. Adopting the draft resolution would set a dangerous precedent and only serve to undermine the ongoing dialogue between the political parties, risk worsening the political and socio-economic situation in the country and affect other countries in the region.

Furthermore, it is, in our opinion, not the role of the Security Council to certify national elections of Member States, all the more so where they do not produce an outright winner. Zimbabweans have a right to choose their own leaders.

It is also important to point out that the seven African leaders who attended the G8 summit stated that sanctions were not the way forward to resolve the political impasse in the country. They expressed the view that Zimbabwe is not a threat to regional peace and security, and therefore the Security Council should yield to the mediation efforts of both SADC and the African Union. It follows therefore that the adoption of the draft resolution would be in disregard of Africa's own position.

Trying to impose a solution from outside would be unfair to Zimbabweans, to SADC and to the African Union. Zimbabwe's problems can be solved by Africans working together. It is our fervent hope that members of the Council will not support the draft resolution, which seeks to involve the Security Council in a purely bilateral dispute between Zimbabwe and the United Kingdom.

**The President**: It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. Unless I hear any objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements before the voting.

**Mr. Kumalo** (South Africa): Earlier this morning, a joint media statement by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) facilitator, the representative of the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) and the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) was issued in Pretoria. The statement reads:

"The talks between the Zimbabwean political parties consisting of ZANU-PF, MDC-Tsvangirai and MDC-Mutambara, chaired by the Government of South Africa as mandated by SADC, resumed in South Africa yesterday. The talks are aimed at finding solutions to the challenges in Zimbabwe."

As we meet this afternoon, the talks are continuing in South Africa as the Zimbabwe parties continue to seek a political solution to the challenges they face, complicated by the holding of an election that was preceded by violence and political intimidation that resulted in a process that was unfair and declared to be not transparent by the observers from SADC, the African Union and the Pan-African Parliament.

South Africa was appointed as facilitator at the Extraordinary Summit of the Heads of State and Government of SADC, chaired by the Chairperson of the SADC the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, held in Dar es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania on 28 and 29 March 2007. At that time, the Extraordinary Summit of SADC appealed for the lifting of all forms of sanctions against Zimbabwe.

The African Union Assembly of Heads of State and Government, meeting in its eleventh ordinary session held from 30 June to 1 July 2008 in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, expressed deep concern about the prevailing situation in Zimbabwe. However, when considering the matter of Zimbabwe, the African Union summit did not call for sanctions against that country. Instead, the African Union summit "appealed to States and all parties concerned to refrain from any action that may negatively impact on the climate for dialogue".

The summit also decided

"to encourage President Robert Mugabe and the leader of the MDC party, Mr. Morgan Tsvangirai, to honour their commitments to initiate dialogue with a view to promoting peace, stability, democracy and reconciliation of the Zimbabwe people".

The summit further

"expressed its appreciation to SADC, and its Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, as well as the facilitator of the intra-Zimbabwe dialogue, His Excellency Thabo

Mbeki, President of the Republic of South Africa, and His Excellency Jean Ping, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, for the ongoing work aimed at reconciling the political parties".

Accordingly, South Africa, as a member of both SADC and the African Union, is obliged to follow the decision of those regional bodies. For that reason, my delegation will vote against the draft resolution before us.

Nonetheless, we are encouraged by the commitment to dialogue by the Zimbabwe parties. That dialogue will lead to the improvement of the humanitarian and economic situation, thereby contributing to a better life for all Zimbabweans. The Security Council must give space for the African Union summit decision to be implemented.

**Mr. Dabbashi** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): Libya has been following very attentively and with great interest the devastating situation in Zimbabwe over the past few months. We are concerned about the ongoing tension between the Government and the opposition.

Through the African Union and in cooperation with its member States, we shall continue to endeavour to defuse the crisis in keeping with the decisions taken by the Union during its recently held eleventh summit at Sharm el-Sheikh.

As the Council is aware, the summit considered all aspects of the situation in Zimbabwe and recognized its complex nature. It also expressed its concern about the situation, as well as its appreciation for the efforts of South African President Mbeki and Mr. Jean Ping of the African Union to promote reconciliation between the political actors in Zimbabwe. The summit adopted a decision expressing the wish that Zimbabwe should resume dialogue and form a Government of national unity. We note that dialogue is now taking place under the aegis of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), represented by President Thabo Mbeki. We are pleased to note that the Zimbabwean parties resumed dialogue yesterday.

I would like to draw attention to the fact that the African Union decided to support the efforts of SADC and called for them to continue in order to help the people and leaders of Zimbabwe to resolve their problems. In that regard, the African Union has appealed to the parties concerned to avoid any action likely to have a negative impact on the climate of dialogue. The African Union has confirmed that the people of Zimbabwe are capable of resolving their problems if they are given the joint support of SADC, the African Union and the international community at large.

SADC and the African Union are supporting the people of Zimbabwe as they strive to preserve their territorial integrity and sovereignty. However, the draft resolution before us today does not serve those objectives. It is in conflict with Article 52 of the Charter of the United Nations, which pertains to regional arrangements, and specifically with paragraph 3 of that Article, which states that

> "[t]he Security Council shall encourage the development of pacific settlement of local disputes through such regional arrangements or by such regional agencies either on the initiative of the States concerned or by reference from the Security Council."

The draft resolution before the Council is based on the assumption that the situation in Zimbabwe poses a threat to peace and security in the region. That assumption is undermined by the fact that the dispute is between Zimbabwean parties and that neighbouring countries affirm that the situation is in no way a threat to regional peace and security. That is why the situation in Zimbabwe does not fall within the purview of the Security Council's mandate. The draft resolution before us also constitutes a violation of Zimbabwe's sovereignty and interference in its internal affairs. That fact is underscored by the first paragraph of the draft resolution, which deliberately omits any reference to Zimbabwe's sovereignty. Security Council resolutions have always reaffirmed the Council's adherence to the principle of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States.

Imposing sanctions on Zimbabwe would hinder African efforts to resolve the crisis in the country through SADC. Sanctions would have serious consequences for the people of Zimbabwe and create a climate of tension that would in no way be conducive to finding a solution to the problem. Imposing sanctions now would be contrary to the international consensus that sanctions are a last resort to be used when all other means have been exhausted. That is especially relevant given that there is no justification

whatever for imposing sanctions. We fear that one of the parties may regard the draft resolution as tacit support for it, which could embolden that party to increase its demands and to refuse to enter into or to continue dialogue to resolve the situation.

Libya, whose leadership has always worked to strengthen the African Union and has continuously endeavoured to resolve African conflicts in the context of African good offices, cannot endorse the draft resolution before the Council and will vote against it.

**Mr. Kafando** (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): History, and in particular Africa's history, has accustomed us to situations in which a small spark has led to a great conflagration. History also teaches us that the most absurd and atrocious of wars are often born of events that we thought were easy to control. Let us therefore not deceive ourselves. We must consider the situation in Zimbabwe as a serious one. Whatever one may say, the worsening of the political and security situation in the country continues to be a potential danger and threat to peace in southern Africa.

The second round of presidential elections that took place on 27 June 2008 was marked by acts of intimidation and violence, thereby compromising the honesty of the balloting and the standing of democracy in both Zimbabwe and Africa. According to the 29 June 2008 statements by the Observer Missions of the Southern Africa Development Community, the Pan-African Parliament and the African Union, that election was not fair, free or credible and thus did not reflect the will of the Zimbabwean people.

The African Union, in keeping with its Constitutive Act, on 1 July 2008 expressed its concern about the loss of human lives and the ongoing violence in Zimbabwe. In order to prevent the conflict from spreading to the whole of the subregion and to foster a climate favourable to democracy, the African Union encouraged the Zimbabwean leaders to engage in dialogue so as to promote peace, stability, democracy and national reconciliation. As a member of the great African family, and faithful to its commitment to peace, Burkina Faso of course endorses that initiative.

However, Burkina Faso is also a member of the Security Council, and in that capacity it must shoulder its responsibilities regarding any situation that it regards as posing a threat to international peace and security. That is why, keeping in mind that the provisions of the draft resolution providing for an embargo on arms imports are designed to prevent a large-scale military conflict, Burkina Faso has decided to lend its support to the draft resolution. I would state clearly, that it is that provision of the draft resolution in particular that essentially explains our position.

We are also convinced that the adoption of the draft resolution would neither compromise nor undermine any moves under way at this stage to bring about a fair settlement to the crisis. On the contrary, we believe that, as a means of exerting pressure, it could help to encourage the Zimbabwean parties to agree as quickly as possible on a consensus political settlement.

**Mr. Kleib** (Indonesia): Indonesia has been following the developments in Zimbabwe closely, and we wish to underline the significance of the negative reports of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the African Union and the Pan-African Parliament observers on the presidential run-off election held on 27 June 2008. Clearly, the conduct of elections has to be undertaken in a free and fair manner. We have been appalled by the political violence, intimidation and the loss of life that has occurred. We have also been concerned by reports of the prevailing dire humanitarian situation.

It is our hope that the people of Zimbabwe will be able to resolve the difficult situation they face in a peaceful and democratic manner and in accordance with Zimbabwe's own constitutional processes. The leaders of the country, in particular, are called upon to recognize the burden of responsibility on their shoulders and to leave no stone unturned in the quest to extricate Zimbabwe from its present predicament.

The people of Zimbabwe deserve international support in that endeavour. Indonesia wishes to acknowledge and reaffirm its support for the pivotal role being played in promoting political reconciliation among the political parties by SADC, by the facilitator of the intra-Zimbabwe dialogue, His Excellency Thabo Mbeki, President of South Africa, and by the African Union. Indeed, the recent African Union summit in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, was unequivocal in its support for dialogue and reconciliation. We commend also the continued mediation efforts by the Secretary-General.

The Security Council, in synergy with such regional efforts, must also support the people of Zimbabwe in tackling the challenges before them. The promotion of peace, stability, reconciliation and democracy should guide our endeavours. In that, we

cannot emphasize enough the importance of the Council working together with SADC and the African Union.

We wish also to emphasize the need for Council unity and a sense of common purpose in addressing this issue. The Security Council has proved able to speak with one voice through its presidential statement of 23 June 2008 (S/PRST/2008/23). It is preferable from our point of view that all Council decisions on the matter should be placed in the same spirit. That we must nurture and sustain.

We therefore deeply regret that the time allocated to discussing the draft resolution has not been sufficient and that flexibility has not yet been fully exercised enabling all members of the Council to fully engage in trying to reach a compromise on this matter.

In our view, any Security Council action must pass two key tests. First, it must serve to promote dialogue and reconciliation in Zimbabwe. In other words, it must provide encouragement and incentives to the political leaders of the country to set aside their differences and place the interests of the nation above anything else. Secondly, it must be in synergy with, and build on, regional efforts to address the issue.

In short, the Security Council must exert a positive influence. It should contribute to establishing sufficient space and the necessary conducive atmosphere to allow dialogue to take place and to succeed. Its members are required to diligently ensure that the measures the Council is contemplating would, in fact, promote solutions. At this juncture, my delegation has doubts whether the measures contained in the draft resolution would promote dialogue among the parties concerned.

In that regard, we are of the view that applying sanctions at this particular stage will not encourage all parties to the conflict to promote dialogue among themselves. Invoking sanctions will also jeopardize ongoing mediation efforts by regional organizations and neighbouring countries.

For those pertinent reasons my delegation will abstain in the vote on the draft resolution. In doing so, our delegation is also looking to the future, for there is a need to maintain the prospect of a united Security Council in addressing this matter in synergy with the regional efforts.

**The President**: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Viet Nam.

Viet Nam shares the deep concern about the current instability, violence and political impasse in Zimbabwe, which are having an adverse impact on the lives of the people of Zimbabwe. We support the mediation efforts by the African Union (AU), the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) and South African President Thabo Mbeki in implementation of the resolution adopted recently at the AU summit in Sharm el-Sheik, with a view to enabling the parties concerned in Zimbabwe to reach a mutually acceptable solution in the spirit of putting the interests of the people of Zimbabwe above all, thereby contributing to the restoration and consolidation of peace, security and stability not only in Zimbabwe but also throughout the region. We are pleased to note that with the good offices led by South African President Thabo Mbeki, the parties concerned in Zimbabwe are engaging in dialogue and negotiations towards that end.

While sharing the concerns about the current situation in Zimbabwe, Viet Nam is of the view that the situation prevailing there does not constitute a threat to regional or international peace and security. That view is shared not only by regional countries, especially the neighbours of Zimbabwe, but also by a great majority of the States Members of the United Nations.

Therefore, Viet Nam holds that the situation in Zimbabwe at present is not within the mandated purview of the Security Council. Moreover, subjecting Zimbabwe to Chapter VII sanctions for the present situation is of serious concern, because the proposed sanction measures not only would fail to facilitate efforts to find a solution to the situation in Zimbabwe, especially those made by the AU and SADC, but also would set a dangerous precedent for intervention in the internal affairs of sovereign States and would run counter to the fundamental principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. For those reasons, Viet Nam cannot support the draft resolution.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I now put to the vote the draft resolution contained in document S/2008/447.

*A vote was taken by show of hands.*

*In favour*:

Belgium, Burkina Faso, Costa Rica, Croatia, France, Italy, Panama, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

*Against*:

China, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Russian Federation, South Africa, Viet Nam

*Abstaining*:

Indonesia

**The President**: The result of the voting is as follows: 9 votes in favour, 5 against and 1 abstention. The draft resolution has not been adopted owing to the negative vote of a permanent member of the Council.

I shall now call on those members of the Council who wish to make statements following the voting.

**Sir John Sawers** (United Kingdom): Deputy Secretary-General Migiro told the Security Council three days ago (see S/PV.5929) that the situation in Zimbabwe was a challenge to the world, and today the Security Council has failed to rise to that challenge. Ms. Migiro said that this was a moment of truth for democracy in Africa. The Security Council has failed to shoulder its responsibility to do what it can to prevent a national tragedy deepening and spreading its effects across Southern Africa.

I would like to be very clear about the draft resolution we have just voted on, a draft resolution sponsored by a range of countries, including African countries. It has been widely misrepresented by some members of the Council and by the representative of Zimbabwe just now. This draft resolution did not represent a new judgement by the Security Council on the recent elections in Zimbabwe. The Council unanimously made that judgement on 23 June through its presidential statement (S/PRST/2008/23). Our collective assessment was that free and fair elections were impossible under the prevailing conditions of a campaign of violence against the political opposition and the denial of the opposition's right to campaign freely. Regrettably, that proved to be the case when President Mugabe went ahead anyway. Local and regional observers, and many African leaders, made clear that the outcome was not free and fair and could not be considered legitimate. We also agreed on 23 June that the results of the 29 March elections must be respected.

Secondly, the draft resolution was not an attempt to undermine ongoing mediations efforts; precisely the opposite. The draft resolution would have required the Government of Zimbabwe to engage with those efforts, and it would have put some countervailing pressure on the ruling regime to balance the appalling pressure and intimidation that they continue to exert on the political opposition. We have supported President Mbeki's mediation efforts, but we have to be realistic: those efforts have so far come to naught. The only one who has benefited to date is Mr. Mugabe.

Thirdly, this draft resolution was not a foray into the internal affairs of an African country. The Security Council has often determined — for example, in Sierra Leone, Sudan and Somalia — that political instability and violence in one country has consequences for wider peace and stability, requiring the Council to act. That remains true in Zimbabwe today. The African Union has already acknowledged, in its resolution of 1 July, the risk that the conflict in Zimbabwe may spread across the subregion.

We should reflect on the opportunities we have lost today.

We have missed the opportunity to impose a legal obligation on Mr. Mugabe's Government to end the violence and intimidation which have scarred Zimbabwe and made normal politics impossible and which are destabilizing the region. The millions of refugees — a quarter of Zimbabwe's population — constitute a stark demonstration of this.

We have missed the opportunity to strengthen the mediation efforts, giving them the full weight of the international community by the addition of a United Nations envoy. We look to the Secretary-General to appoint such an envoy anyway, on his own authority.

We have missed the opportunity to back up South Africa's mediation efforts with something more than words. That is why the draft resolution included carefully targeted sanctions aimed at those who have brought about the current crisis, with a clear message that they would be lifted once an inclusive political settlement is reached.

And finally, we have lost an opportunity to impose an arms embargo. The last thing Zimbabwe needs now is more arms. We hope that Government and civil society in Southern Africa will continue to ensure

that arms do not get through to the Mugabe Government.

This draft resolution only failed because it has been vetoed by the Russian Federation and China. Russia's action is, frankly, inexplicable. Only three days ago, the meeting of Group of Eight leaders, which of course includes President Medvedev of Russia, adopted a statement on Zimbabwe that recommended the appointment of a United Nations special envoy and went on to say, "We will take further steps, inter alia introducing financial and other measures against those individuals responsible for violence".

The draft resolution that Russia and China have just vetoed was precisely to implement those two decisions. We view their decision as deeply damaging to the long-term interests of Zimbabwe's people. It has in our view harmed the prospects for bringing to an early end the violence and the oppression in Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe faces not only a political crisis. It also faces a grave humanitarian crisis for which the Government of Zimbabwe bears full responsibility. The Zimbabwean authorities have ignored every single appeal for the restrictions on humanitarian supplies to be lifted. Again, the Council failed today by vetoing this draft resolution to require Mr. Mugabe's Government to allow humanitarian aid to be delivered.

Many times during our discussions of this issue, Council members have said that the people of Zimbabwe must be allowed to find their own way forward. Of course, they must; that is what they tried to do when they voted on 29 March. We must respect the outcome of the elections on that day. If we are not to see more violence, more economic chaos, more refugees and a greater threat to regional peace and stability, then we, the international community, have to do what we can to create the conditions for a real political process that some chance of success. At present, such a process does not exist.

With the vetoing of this draft resolution, we now need to look for a new way forward. We will discuss this with our partners in Europe and with our friends in the African Union and across the world. The people of Zimbabwe need to be given hope that there is an end in sight to their suffering. The Security Council today has failed to offer them that hope.

**Mr. Churkin** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I wish first of all to respond to the irresponsible and factually inaccurate statement made by the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom, who took it upon himself to interpret the Russian position with reference to a decision of the Group of Eight (G-8). I would recall something that anyone who read that decision should know: not coincidentally, it makes no reference to the actions of the Security Council. The Russian Federation based its action on today's draft resolution precisely on the position formulated by the G-8, and of which every member of that group should be perfectly aware.

I should now like to set out the reasoning behind our vote on the draft text that was before us today. The result of the vote on that draft resolution, on sanctions against Zimbabwe, was largely predictable and was due to a number of circumstances. In the positions of a number of Council members, we have of late seen an increasingly obvious attempt to take the Council beyond its Charter prerogatives and beyond the maintenance of international peace and security. We believe such practices to be illegitimate and dangerous and apt to lead to a realignment of the entire United Nations system. The Russian Federation intends to continue to counter such trends, so that all States without exception will firmly comply with the Charter of the Organization.

We are firmly convinced that the problems of Zimbabwe cannot be resolved by artificially elevating them to the level of a threat to international peace and security. The Council's application in this instance of enforcement measures under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter is unjustified and excessive. Moreover, the draft resolution represents nothing but an attempt by the Council to interfere in the internal affairs of States, contrary to the Charter.

The draft ignores important realities. The negotiating process in Zimbabwe has begun; dialogue has been launched between the representatives of the Government and the opposition and is proceeding apace. In that context, a broad range of problems in the inter-Zimbabwean settlement, including the formation of a Government of national unity, is under consideration. In that respect, we note the mediation efforts of President Mbeki of South Africa and President Santos of Angola, which are opening a window for realistic opportunities to overcome the internal conflict in Zimbabwe.

The sponsors of the draft resolution have not considered the opinions of the States of the region,

which reject its sanctions philosophy and are calling for the search for a political solution to be continued. Indeed, the draft ignores the consensual decision of the African Union appealing to States to refrain from any act that could have a negative impact on advancing the dialogue between the Zimbabwean parties. The adoption of a resolution could lead to a realignment of the regional situation and deepen existing problems. That is why the sponsors have been warned against such action by countries of the region that are involved in the search for a solution to the inter-Zimbabwean conflict.

On the basis of all those factors, the Russian Federation voted against the draft resolution.

In ignoring the voices of the skeptical and those who disagree with them, the sponsors unfortunately squandered a genuine opportunity to coordinate a Council response to events in Zimbabwe that would truly have promoted the success of the political dialogue in a country friendly to Russia and, subsequently, a way out of the current profound crisis.

However, the fact that the draft resolution was not adopted hardly means that the grave situation in Zimbabwe is beyond the purview of international attention. The Russian Federation calls on the authorities of that country and the opposition to pursue constructive dialogue in order to develop a formula for a political settlement as soon as possible. Harare must understand that there is no alternative.

**Mr. Ripert** (France) (*spoke in French*): On 23 June, the Security Council determined here in this Chamber that conditions had not been established for fair and free elections in Zimbabwe on 27 June and condemned the campaign of violence launched against the opposition. That Government decided to ignore the appeals of the international community. International observers deployed by the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), the Pan-African Parliament and the African Union confirmed that the vote was neither just nor equitable. Indeed, we saw a parody of an election and a denial of democracy.

Political violence continues in Zimbabwe. Today, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees indicated that a growing number of refugees have had to flee their country, bearing the scars of beatings and even of torture.

We must act to end that situation, which, as the Secretary-General noted, threatens to destabilize all of southern Africa. France fully supports the efforts of the African Union, SADC and, in particular, Jean Ping and President Mbeki to help the Zimbabweans to find a fair and lasting solution to the crisis. The European Union has indicated that any formula would be acceptable that respects the will of the people of Zimbabwe as expressed in the elections of 29 March, in which Mr. Tsvangirai and his party prevailed.

We believe that the United Nations and the African Union have an important role to play, but if genuine political dialogue to end the crisis is to begin, pressure is also necessary in order to protect the people and to hold those who are blocking the current political process accountable. That is why France and other States members of the European Union have endorsed the need to adopt a reversible sanctions regime targeting those who have perpetrated violence and providing for an arms embargo. France therefore co-sponsored the draft resolution submitted by the United States to that end.

France notes that the European Union is considering intensifying the sanctions measures it already has in place. Furthermore, the communiqué issued by the most recent summit of the heads of State and Government of the G8 referred explicitly to additional phases and actions, including financial measures.

We note that the draft resolution received nine votes in favour from Council members. We note that it was not adopted; each member assumed its responsibilities. What is important now is to ensure the victory of freedom and democracy in Zimbabwe to which the people of that country are entitled after so many years of misery and suffering.

**Mr. Weisleder** (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): Costa Rica voted in favour of the draft resolution because we feel that the situation prevailing in Zimbabwe since March, fundamentally as concerns respect for the will of the people, represents a threat to international peace and security and obliges the Council to respond and act accordingly.

In recent months, Costa Rica has stressed the importance of the role of regional organizations and its hope that the crisis in Zimbabwe could be resolved satisfactorily through such channels. The alarming humanitarian situation, the levels of violence and

intimidation — which, far from decreasing, are on the rise — the dangerous implications for the region and the unwillingness of Robert Mugabe's Government to respect the views of this Council, the international community and the will of its own people led us to support the draft resolution.

In our view, free and fair elections are essential to protecting and promoting human rights and the rule of law. States have an obligation to secure the necessary means to facilitate full and effective participation in their electoral processes. However, in spite of the appeals of the international community and this Council, the Government of Mr. Mugabe decided to proceed with the elections on 27 June, which failed to meet even the most minimal requirements to be considered free and fair. That is the view of such regional bodies as the Southern Africa Development Community that were present as observers to the so-called elections of 27 June. They concluded that, given the circumstances and conditions in which the voting took place, the official results did not reflect the will of the Zimbabwean people. That is why many Governments throughout the world, including those of Zimbabwe's neighbours, do not recognize the validity of the elections or the legitimacy of the Government of Mr. Mugabe.

Costa Rica believes that the demand conveyed by the Security Council to the Government of Zimbabwe in the draft resolution that has been rejected that it fulfil its obligations towards the inhabitants of the country should be backed up by tangible measures. That is why we voted in favour of the imposition of sanctions, as proposed in the draft resolution.

However, as we have stated on various occasions, this Council should be especially disciplined with respect to the imposition of sanctions and should therefore consider and apply fair procedures and clear parametres when it implements them. That would facilitate their better implementation and result in their greater efficacy. We were therefore pleased that certain changes were incorporated into the draft resolution by the sponsors, as requested by my country, notably in paragraph 7 and concerning in particular the setting of a start-up date.

However, although our country understands the reasons for setting the start-up date at May 2005, we would have preferred that the draft resolution provide for the implementation of sanctions to be limited to the specific events dating from March of this year. We say that essentially for two reasons.

First, by limiting the sanctions in that manner it would have added clarity to the parametres used to establish sanctions. Secondly, however, and even more importantly, such an approach would have identified much more clearly the strongest motivation for the action of this Council, which is, from the point of view of our country, the lack of respect for the popular will expressed in the elections.

Another point that Costa Rica wishes to highlight is the importance of operative paragraph 12 in the draft resolution, in which the Council clearly stated that it would consider the measures imposed "if ... an inclusive political settlement is agreed, which respects the will of the Zimbabwean people and the results of the 29 March 2008 elections" (*S/2008/447, para. 12*). Those words are significant because, in our view, they make it clear that the sanctions would be coercive and not punitive measures. It is our hope that individuals listed in the annex to the draft resolution will heed the will of this Council, the international community and their own people as early as possible and engage in serious, substantial and inclusive negotiations in order to achieve a political agreement that respects the popular will, even in the knowledge that the draft resolution has not been adopted.

There can be no doubt that the violations of other human rights that are taking place in Zimbabwe are serious and that the perpetrators should be brought to justice in order to establish their responsibility. In that regard, we particularly welcome the inclusion in the draft resolution of language concerning the need to fix responsibility for human rights abuses. The distinctive nature of the Zimbabwean case is — let us be very clear — that there has been a total lack of respect for the will of an entire people expressed in free and fair elections.

In article 21 (3) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the United Nations recognized the principle that

> "[t]he will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures".

That principle has been developed in numerous resolutions of the most democratic body of this Organization, the General Assembly. Those include resolution 45/150 of 1990 and, most recently, resolution 62/150, adopted by an overwhelming majority of 182 votes in favour, including all the members of this Council, with no votes against and only two abstentions.

Further, this Council, very early in its consideration of the situation of the apartheid regime in South Africa, and precisely also in the case of Rhodesia, the Zimbabwe of apartheid, recognized the importance for international peace and security that States should be organized in keeping with the rule of consultation, respecting the will of majorities as well as the rights of minorities. Since 1993, with the case of Somalia, the positive references to democratic governance on the part of this Council have been oft repeated. In that regard, perhaps the clearest cases in which the Council has considered the lack or the breakdown of democracy as an element justifying its actions, even under Chapter VII of the Charter, have been those of Haiti and Sierra Leone, in its resolutions 841 (1993), 940 (1994) and 1132 (1997), inter alia.

Now, given the particular characteristics of this case vis-à-vis the others that I have mentioned, Costa Rica believes that with this draft resolution the Council would been undertaking something new and in some ways would establishing a precedent. Costa Rica sees in it the intention to strengthen democracies.

Finally, we regret the fact that the draft resolution has been vetoed, but we welcome the fact that we have had an explanation from those who exercised the veto — something that we insisted upon. We certainly hope that democracy will return soon to Zimbabwe and that there will be an improvement in the human rights situation and the general situation in humanitarian terms of the citizens of that country.

**Mr. Jurica** (Croatia): Croatia is a sponsor of the draft resolution that a majority of delegations just a few minutes ago clearly voted in favour of. We deeply regret the fact that the Council, due to vetoes, fell short of its mandate by failing to adopt the draft resolution on sanctions today.

We firmly believe that the Council's action would have been timely and has been long awaited, not only because the situation in Zimbabwe is a clear-cut case for applying the concept of conflict prevent, but also because the deep crisis and continuous worsening of the political, social, economic and humanitarian situation in Zimbabwe represents a threat to regional peace and security, and thus to international peace and security.

Having said that, I would merely affirm that the measures foreseen in the draft resolution were never aimed at the people of Zimbabwe; on the contrary, they targeted those who prevent them from expressing their own free will and who use violence, fear and intimidation against their own people to achieve electoral goals by force.

Furthermore, those measures provided for by the draft resolution were envisaged as an incentive to dialogue and national reconciliation. They would have been instrumental in applying long-needed pressure on Mr. Mugabe and the ruling clique by sending them a clear message that the international community cannot tolerate violence, double standards and the distortion of democracy at the expense of the Zimbabwean people.

My delegation firmly believes that sanctions would have contributed to the overall stabilization of the situation in the country and the region and would have ultimately led Zimbabwe to the path of true democracy and prosperity.

Finally, once again, we deplore the results of today's vote and the failure of the Council to adopt the resolution.

**Mr. Wang Guangya** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation has insurmountable difficulties with the draft resolution and therefore voted against it.

Since the March elections in Zimbabwe caused a political dispute, China has closely followed the evolution of the situation in the country. We call upon all parties in Zimbabwe to take to heart the overall interests of the nation, keep calm and exercise restraint, and settle their differences in accordance with the law and through dialogue and consultation. We support the active good offices efforts of the international community, including those of the African Union and the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

The recent African Union summit held serious discussions on the question of Zimbabwe and adopted a resolution calling upon all parties in the country to start a dialogue, seek to establish a Government of national unity and support SADC's ongoing good

offices on the question of Zimbabwe. It also called upon all parties to exercise restraint and not to take any action that might have a negative impact on the situation. China believes that the African Union resolution on the question of Zimbabwe represents an important position that reflects the consensus of African countries on the current situation. The Security Council should accord it great attention and full respect.

In talks at the recently held G8 summit in Hokkaido, Japan, several African leaders once again clearly stated their opposition to imposing sanctions against Zimbabwe at this stage. In recent days, during the Security Council's consultations on the situation in Zimbabwe, many countries, including China, repeatedly called upon the Council to respect the position of African countries on that issue and to allow more time for the good offices and mediation efforts of the African Union and the Southern African Development Community. Regrettably, the sincere appeals and reasonable proposals of those countries were not taken on board. China deeply regrets that.

China has always believed that negotiation and dialogue are the best approach to solving problems on the international level. Lightly using or threatening to use sanctions is not conducive to solving problems. More important, the development of the situation in Zimbabwe to date has not gone beyond the realm of internal affairs. It does not constitute a threat to the world's peace and security. The situation in Zimbabwe is quite complex and sensitive at present. The relevant negotiating process has begun. By adopting a resolution imposing sanctions on Zimbabwe now, the Security Council would unavoidably be interfering with the negotiating process. That would lead to a further deterioration of the situation.

At present, the situation in Zimbabwe is the focus of broad attention in the international community. Maintaining peace and stability in Zimbabwe is in the interests not only of the people of Zimbabwe, but of the countries of the region as well. China sincerely hopes that the opposing sides in Zimbabwe will maintain calm and exercise restraint, cease all violent acts and avoid taking any action that may lead to a further deterioration in or exacerbation of the situation in the country, so as to establish favourable conditions and enable the negotiating process to continue. China calls upon all parties in Zimbabwe to cooperate with the good offices efforts of the countries and organizations in the region to find a way to achieve political reconciliation as soon as possible in order to peacefully settle the question of Zimbabwe through consultation and dialogue.

**Mr. Belle** (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): We sincerely regret that the draft resolution could not be adopted today. Although the vote reflected our differing positions as to the means to be used, we are nevertheless resolutely unanimous as regards the seriousness of the situation in Zimbabwe and the goals to be pursued. All Council members are convinced of the need for a political transition in Zimbabwe. Belgium was a sponsor of the draft resolution and voted in its favour. We did so because we believed it to be a vital incentive to achieving a negotiated settlement in Zimbabwe.

We welcome the efforts of the Southern African Development Community and the African Union. However, we believe that, without pressure, there will be no negotiation. To that end, the Council's actions in general, and the draft resolution in particular, should support the mediation efforts in the region. We hope that Zimbabweans in Harare understand that we have clearly heard their appeals and have met our responsibilities to ensure respect for their legitimate aspirations for democracy.

**Mr. Arias** (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are all aware of the deplorable economic situation in which the people of Zimbabwe find themselves and the serious and widespread violations of their human rights being committed, primarily by their Government. That issue did not give rise to a great deal of discussion during the debate on the draft resolution that has just been put before the Council. Among other things, differences in position focused on whether the Charter authorized the Council to adopt the draft resolution before it, given that some members believe that the situation in Zimbabwe is strictly an internal affair that does not pose a risk to either international or regional peace.

Panama believes that, while it is true that when the Charter initially gave the Security Council responsibility for maintaining international peace and security, it was referring mainly to conflicts between States. In today's globalized and interdependent world, the concept of threats to international peace has evolved to include situations in which there are serious and widespread violations of human rights such as

those being suffered today by the people of Zimbabwe. In that connection, I shall limit myself to referring to the report of the Secretary-General, which states that the seriousness of the situation and its potential consequences could have widespread repercussions for regional peace and security.

For those reasons, Panama voted in favour of the draft resolution.

**Mr. Mantovani** (Italy): In line with the position of the European Union, we believe that the people of Zimbabwe deserve to enjoy the right to express its legitimate will and that the conditions for democracy and respect for human rights should be quickly restored in the country.

**Mr. Khalilzad** (United States of America): The United States is disappointed that the Russian Federation and China today prevented the Security Council from adopting a strong draft resolution condemning and sanctioning the violent regime of Robert Mugabe. China and Russia have stood with Mugabe against the people of Zimbabwe.

More than a majority of the members of the Security Council stood with the people of Zimbabwe by demanding that Mugabe put an immediate end to the violence and start serious negotiations with the opposition. The draft resolution would have supported the courageous efforts of the Zimbabwean people to change their lives peacefully, through elections. Unfortunately, the Russian Federation and China blocked the adoption of this draft resolution for reasons that we think are not borne out by the facts on the ground.

The U-turn in the Russian position is particularly surprising and disturbing. Only a few days ago, the Russian Federation was supportive of a Group of Eight (G-8) statement that said:

> "We express our grave concern about the situation in Zimbabwe. We deplore the fact that the Zimbabwean authorities pressed ahead with the presidential election despite the absence of appropriate conditions for free and fair voting as a result of their systematic violence, obstruction and intimidation.
>
> "...
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> "... We recommend the appointment of a special envoy of the United Nations Secretary-General to report on the political, humanitarian, human rights and security situation and to support regional efforts to take forward mediation between political parties. We will take further steps, inter alia introducing financial and other measures against those individuals responsible for violence."

The Russian performance here today raises questions about the Russian Federation's reliability as a G-8 partner.

There should be no doubt that what is happening in Zimbabwe affects peace and security in the region. Deputy Secretary-General Migiro called the situation in Zimbabwe the "single greatest challenge to regional stability in Southern Africa". The African Union adopted a resolution expressing its concern regarding the "urgent need to prevent further worsening of the situation and [taking a decision] with a view to avoiding the spread of conflict with the consequential negative impact on the country and the subregion".

Three African States — Liberia, Sierra Leone and Burkina Faso — were among the sponsors of the draft resolution before the Council today. Liberia and Sierra Leone, whose democratic Governments emerged after years of conflict, with the help of the United Nations and the Security Council, joined in sponsoring the draft resolution as an indication of their concern about the impact of the situation in Zimbabwe on the region. We applaud their courage in standing up for the people of Zimbabwe.

Further, there are no serious, substantive negotiations under way between the Mugabe regime and the opposition, contrary to what the representative of South Africa reported. The Mugabe regime and the representatives from the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) had a preliminary meeting in South Africa the other day, in which the MDC laid down conditions for substantive negotiations. But these are not yet under way.

Finally, this draft resolution would have supported regional and international mediation efforts, not undercut them. This draft resolution would have empowered regional and international mediators by giving Mr. Mugabe an incentive to negotiate seriously. The surest way for Mr. Mugabe to have avoided a sanctions resolution would have been to have acted immedintely to end the violence and start serious negotiations with the opposition. He had a week since

our introduction of this draft resolution to act. Unfortunately, during that time violence has continued, as has Mr. Mugabe's bellicose rhetoric. For example, Mugabe's spokesman, George Charamba, said of those drawing attention to the flaws in the post-29-March electoral process, "They can go hang. They can go and hang a thousand times". That is an irresponsible response and shows the regime's contempt for the people of Zimbabwe as well as for the international community.

Although this draft resolution was not adopted, we will continue to work with all Security Council delegations to monitor closely the situation in Zimbabwe and to urge the Secretary-General to appoint a special representative to support the negotiation process between the political parties in Zimbabwe and to report to the Council on the political, humanitarian, human rights and security situation in Zimbabwe.

**The President**: I now give the floor to the representative of Angola.

**Mr. Antonio** (Angola) (*spoke in French*): First of all, Mr. President, I should like to express my delegation's appreciation to you personally and to all the members of the Council for having agreed to give us the floor on a question so vital for Africa. Angola is speaking as Chair of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation.

As all Council members will know, that Organ and the facilitator of the intra-Zimbabwean dialogue, His Excellency Mr. Thabo Mbeki, President of South Africa, are sparing no effort to implement the African Union decision adopted recently in Sharm el-Sheikh encouraging the parties to initiate a dialogue to promote peace, stability, democracy and reconciliation between themselves. Very fortunately, this dialogue, is getting under way with South African mediation. Moreover, a delegation headed by His Excellency Mr. João Bernardo de Miranda, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Angola, went to Zimbabwe this week, as Thabo Mbeki had done before him.

There is ongoing cooperation between Luanda and Pretoria in these efforts. As was mentioned by the representative of the Russian Federation, President José Eduardo dos Santos and President Thabo Mbeki are sparing no effort to help the endeavours for a viable solution succeed. Given all the efforts that I have indicated, the adoption of a draft resolution sanctioning one of the parties would tend in the present circumstances to further complicate things on the ground and exacerbate tensions to the point of damaging the ongoing dialogue.

The efforts in the region are in keeping with the spirit of the United Nations Charter. Recognizing the importance of such endeavours, the Security Council has devoted several public meetings to the role of regional and subregional organizations and has adopted statements and resolutions on that subject that were not intended to remain dead letters. The outcome of this year's New York meeting between the Security Council and the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council (see S/PV.5868) is of interest here. Paragraph 9 of resolution 1809 (2008), for example, clearly stipulates the need for coordination between the African Union and the Security Council on peace and security.

In a number of situations the Security Council has demonstrated that it can truly listen to the region. Thus, when appropriate, it would be logical for the Council refrain from creating exceptions, giving the impression that it listens to the region only when the message suits certain Council members.

Having experienced more than 40 years of conflict, the Southern African subregion is in a good position to appreciate the true value of peace and stability in the region. Thus, it is working towards that goal — including through economic integration, as SADC has continued to demonstrate.

It is clear that we are all concerned about the situation in Zimbabwe. But there are differences in approach as to the methods to find a sustainable solution. For our part, we believe that we should give dialogue a chance: we recognize the virtues of such dialogue.

**The President**: I now give the floor to the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania.

**Mr. Mahiga** (United Republic of Tanzania): We thank you, Mr. President, for convening this special meeting of the Security Council to debate the political crisis in Zimbabwe.

The Council has already expressed concern over the possible implications of the Zimbabwe crisis for regional peace and security by adopting its presidential statement of 23 June 2008 (S/PRST/2008/23). The crisis has since deepened, with the flawed presidential

elections in Zimbabwe of 27 June 2008, as witnessed by election monitors from African institutions. The African Union has expressed its heightened concern and engagement regarding the crisis in Zimbabwe, by adopting unanimously on 1 July 2008 a resolution which condemns the political motivated violence in Zimbabwe. The resolution encourages dialogue by all the parties and calls for the formation of a government of national unity. The resolution ushers in a new and more robust initiative to address the precarious Zimbabwe political and security situation. It merits serious consideration by the Security Council in order to enable the Council to work in tandem with the African Union and to create an atmosphere in Zimbabwe and the region that is more conducive to a negotiated settlement.

The political significance of the African Union resolution for the prospects for advancing the peace process in Zimbabwe lies in five areas which the Council may wish to consider as the way forward to support the peace initiative of Africa and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) intended to address the situation in Zimbabwe.

First, the African Union resolution has the full political backing of the entire membership of the African Union, which now remains fully seized of the issue.

Secondly, the resolution is advancing the peace process from a facilitation mode by President Mbeki before the elections to a mediation effort in the post-election period.

Thirdly, the resolution calls upon SADC to form a mediation mechanism which was not there before for the exclusive purpose of initiating a dialogue among the parties and the formation of a government of national unity in Zimbabwe.

Fourthly, as we speak, President Mbeki has started fresh efforts to prepare for the SADC mediation. The 14 ministers of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation are meeting on 16 July 2008 in Durban to elaborate on the mandate and modalities of negotiations and mediation by the proposed mechanism, which should begin to function expeditiously.

Finally, the resolution further calls for undivided support from the entire international community for the new political process initiated by SADC and the African Union.

In the light of these new developments, the Council should consider focusing on supporting the new political initiative which has begun and should give it a chance to proceed. At this stage, the political option should take precedence over the punitive option. We urge the adoption of a judicious combination and calibrated sequencing of approaches to this crisis without prejudice to the powers and rights of the Security Council to determine its agenda and priorities.

**The President**: I now give the floor to Her Excellency Mrs. Lila H. Ratsifandrihamanana, Permanent Observer of the African Union.

**Mrs. Ratsifandrihamanana**: First of all, Mr. President, I wish to thank you for inviting us to address the Security Council on this important question. I take this opportunity to commend the Council for the significant amount of attention it continues to devote to a number of issues of concern to Africa.

Africa is fully seized of the complexity of the situation in Zimbabwe. And, as we all witnessed, at the recently concluded summit in Sharm el-Sheikh African leaders shouldered their full responsibility to address the issue within the context of efforts towards strengthening democratic governance throughout the continent. The African Union (AU) has been closely monitoring and working on the situation in Zimbabwe, together with the Southern African Development Community (SADC). It is in that context that key components of the African Union such as the Pan-African Parliament, SADC as the subregional organization concerned and the AU Commission have all been closely engaged and have deployed various efforts towards the preparation and observation of the election in Zimbabwe. The efforts made so far have included the deployment of almost 1,000 election observers from various bodies within the continent and the active involvement of leaders such as President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, former President Kabbah of Sierra Leone, who leads the African Union observation team for the election, and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Mr. Jean Ping.

Furthermore, both the Executive Council of the African Union and the Assembly of 53 countries' heads of State or Government devoted serious attention to the question during the summit in Sharm el-Sheikh. A

resolution was issued, by which the Assembly expressed its deep concern at the prevailing situation in Zimbabwe. We would like to thank you, Mr. President, for drawing the attention of the Council to that decision, to which various speakers have referred today.

Considering the urgent need to prevent the further worsening of the situation, and in order to avoid the spread of conflict, with the consequent negative impact on the country and the subregion, and further considering the need to create an environment conducive to democracy, the Assembly decided to encourage President Robert Mugabe and the leader of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), Mr. Morgan Tsvangirai, to honour their commitment to initiate dialogue with a view to promoting peace, stability, democracy and the reconciliation of the Zimbabwean people; to support the call for the creation of a government of national unity; to support the SADC facilitation; and to recommend that SADC mediation efforts should be continued in order to resolve the problems that are being faced. In that regard, SADC should establish a mechanism on the ground in order to seize the momentum for a negotiated solution. The Assembly also decided to appeal to States and all parties concerned to refrain from any action that may have a negative impact on the climate of dialogue.

The Assembly also expressed its conviction that, in the spirit of all SADC initiatives, the people of Zimbabwe will be able to resolve their differences and work together once again as one nation, provided they receive undivided support from SADC, the African Union and the world at large.

Today, we still wish to appeal to the Security Council to lend its full support to the implementation of that resolution of the African Union and to give the region's current efforts a chance. SADC and the African Union are working unrelentingly towards the speedy resolution of the political crisis in Zimbabwe and are working to facilitate reconciliation of the Zimbabwean people.

Today, we, the African Union and SADC, also need the full support and confidence of the international community in assuming leadership in the resolution of this African political crisis.

It is indeed because we are fully cognizant of the seriousness of the situation in Zimbabwe that we, as Africans, have assumed our full responsibility for finding an acceptable and lasting political solution.

Finally, we believe that the support of the Council for the decision of the African Union would be an expression of solidarity with the entire African community and, indeed, solidarity with the Zimbabwean people.

**The President**: There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

*The meeting rose at 5.50 p.m.*